

SEKEM Insight

SEKEM's Journal for Culture, Economy, Society and Ecology in Egypt

Editorial

Dear Readers,

that each institution is only as good as the people who make it up and investing it with meaning is common knowledge. For this reason, SEKEM has always been particularly interested in supporting further professional education for its personnel.

For instance, there is an intensive training program available for the teaching staff at the SEKEM School, a group of individuals that changes often. The programme familiarises staff members with the basic principles of teaching at the institution, which has adopted many elements of Waldorf education. Many teachers even receive personalised coaching during the early days of each new school year, as one of the supervisors of the programme, Evelyne Schindler, tells us.

The same attention is given also to SEKEM's technical personnel. As part of a solar energy project one such course presently trains „Solar energy instructors“. This group even includes a large number of women, who also in Egypt are becoming more and more interested in the technical professions.

Your Team of Editors

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Solar Technology

First Course for Trainers is Complete

SEKEM School

New Staff Set to Work

Cooperation

Heliopolis University Reaches Out

First Solar Teacher Training at the Heliopolis University

The first batch of solar technology trainers has now been trained using a recently developed "TOT-training course" developed by the Heliopolis University in cooperation with Austrian and other partners.



Participants of the "Training-of-Trainers (TOT)"-course recently carried out at the Heliopolis University.

“ Learning by doing ...” was the motto of the first basic training course for solar technology instructors that was recently carried out at the Heliopolis University in Cairo and organized by the Austrian company SEKEM Energy. This training course is a first in the field of professional further education for the Heliopolis University. The participants – including many young women – were enthusiastic about the course and the technical training they received.

The course had been developed in the framework of a development project, which is co-financed by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). Its main goal is to promote the use of solar energy in Egypt using a high-quality local training offers and equipment. This training was implemented together with the BFI Burgenland (Austria).

Among the most difficult challenges for the organisers was the language barrier. The original training manual and



There are several highly skilled young women technicians among the group of participants.

technical instructions had to be translated into English and a special version had to be produced for the local instructors. However, it was clear from the outset that solid theoretical knowledge on paper would not guarantee professional education in the first place. Thus, an essential part of the basic training was therefore to build construct and erect a mobile demonstration plant which would include all the necessary components to build such a unit for regular service. The participants, who came from broad walks of life and who are presently employed in a wide variety of fields and by a number of different types of employers such as universities, government agencies and other NGO's, exhibited great enthusiasm and skill in familiarising themselves with this technology that is still relatively new in Egypt through this practical approach.

Many Women Join In

While a few still chuckled in the beginning when many young women clad in headscarf took up screwdrivers and confidently set to work, the sight of them competently soldering copper pipes had become an entirely normal thing to see by the end of the first week already.

The training for the occupational profile of the "Trainer in Solar Technology" is divided into three parts. Only participants who complete the basic training and the following courses successfully later get the chance to teach a course at

SEKEM School Receives New Staff for New School Year

Many of the newcomers among the school's new staff are in part being supported in their work by supporters from Germany who travelled to Egypt for the start of the school year.

This year many new teachers have taken up their work at the SEKEM School and a number of its classes start with new class teachers into the now beginning school year.

Numerous New Colleagues

The first, third and fifth grades of SEKEM's best known educational institution started off with new teachers. In particular, the fifth grade should benefit from the change of teachers as with their new teacher, Mr. Hossam, who has years of professional teaching experience already, a highly experienced education will be taking up the work. The former teacher of the third grade, Mr. Anwar, has moved on the teach at the Heliopolis University where he took over training duties in connection with SEKEM's project „EduCamp“, thus leading to another change of class teachers necessary at the school who will now be lead by a new young teacher. The first

several universities of Cairo on their own. The mobile demonstration plant that has now been built will be used for training purposed in order to improve the understanding of future solar technicians with practical experiments and measurements during the operation of such a complex installation.

The next training will be held in February 2015. Then issues such as the detailed technical planning of solar thermal plants will be on the syllabus. Until then, all trainees will be taking their homework home lest they not forget any of the new skills they have just acquired.

SEKEM Energy team

class also received a new instructor has already started off very well into the new year. About thirty children making up this first new class of the new school year.

The science section of the SEKEM School has also received two new teachers. One of them has taken over teaching the subjects of biology and chemistry, another one that of physics. English and German, music and craft subjects are also well catered for.

Intensive Support for Newcomers

All teachers will be accompanied and support staff which will be assisting them very closely over the first days and weeks of the new school year. Some of the less experienced new educators will benefit from very intensive „coaching“ in each of their individual lessons during the early days of the new year. Others will receive support as required by the SEKEM School's so-called „Elders“ – older, more experienced teachers – who help other teaching staff where necessary and also advise each of them individually. This can occasionally lead to some very lively teamwork at the beginning of each new teaching period.

Before that starts off, all teachers have usually long visited an extended preparatory course for several weeks. During the last two weeks before the start of school, the most inexperienced in the new teaching staff work through the "B2 module" (personal development) that is part of the great number of training opportunities for adults SEKEM offers to new staff. During this period, a group of older employees are working on deepening the understanding of their sensory abilities through practical exercise. The first few weeks after the beginning of the new school year will show if the training was already sufficient or as to be augmented by additional courses from

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Impressions from SEKEM



SEKEM's training schemes. The submission all participants' personal "portfolios" at the end of each set of these courses is usually a good time to assess their abilities. The review and evaluation of these will be the task of SEKEM's existing staff in addition to their daily work in the coming weeks. The past few years have shown how useful this "portfolio work" actually is for arriving staff. Many teaching personalities exhibited talents or other skills that were not readily discernible from the outset only after getting this chance to pour all their experience and expertise into a specific project.

Trainings in additional subjects (black-board drawing, water colour painting, form drawing, kindergarten painting) will continue until the end of October for new and interested colleagues once a week (3 hours).

Review of Training Materials

Parallel to such educational preparation, the school's operations including the development of syllabi, curricula and course content also has to be reviewed and, where necessary, adjusted. In fact, the teacher training programme is currently

being completely revised and adjusted to new conditions at the institution. The manual for the teacher education program is the core document at the heart of SEKEM's training offers and will be re-compiled after its review. It will then form the basis of all teaching at the school whose quality of education has already become a role model in the area. Yes, SEKEM's school education does bear the sign of "excellence" for many.

Evelyne Schindler

Evelyne Schindler supervises and co-develops teacher training at the SEKEM School.

Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation and Heliopolis University Cooperate



Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish (SEKEM) and Dr. René Klaff (director of the regional office of the Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation) sign an agreement of cooperation between the foundation and the Heliopolis University.

Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish has recently been a guest to the conference on „National Dialogue on Climate Change - Liberal Policies and Climate Change“, which took place in Cairo 20-22 September 2014. The event by the Arab Youth Union for Freedom and Democracy (AYUFD) was organised and carried out in cooperation with the Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation for Freedom and VVD International.

On this occasion Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish spoke on the topic „Free Market: How Can a Free Economy Contribute to the Conservation of Natural Resources?“. In his speech, Dr. Abouleish dealt primarily with the idea of sustainable development and outlined its fundamental ideas using the example of SEKEM. He described mainly the everyday operational practice in light of a model of sustainable economic development and explained how sustainable business practices are reflected in the annual sustainability reports of the SEKEM initiative and their companies. He also demonstrated how this commitment is guaranteed by standards and regularly independently

verified. He specifically emphasized the importance of the interaction of the four societal areas of economic, cultural, and social activity as well as care for the environment.

The Heliopolis University has been cooperating with the Cairo-based German Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation for a time and the two organisations have used the recent opportunity to agree on further cooperation for the coming 5 years. To this purpose, representatives of SEKEM and the foundation signed a memorandum of understanding.

Participants in the conference consisted in members of the various member organizations of the Arab Youth Union for freedom and democracy from Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine. The Arab delegation was accompanied by three youth leaders from European organizations.

Friedrich Naumann Foundation

! More information:
<http://www.freiheit.org>

“Alternative Nobel Prize” Goes to Edward Snowden

The honorary non-monetary “Alternative Nobel Prize” awarded annually by the Stockholm-based “Right Livelihood Award Foundation” will this year go to the whistle-blower Edward Snowden, „because he has revealed with courage and competence the unprecedented scale of state surveillance, its threat to fundamental democratic processes and constitutional rights.“

Additionally, the journalist of the British newspaper „The Guardian“, Alan Rusbridger, who had worked with Snowden in the process of the past years is also honoured on behalf of the medium itself which receives the prize „for building a media organization that has dedicated itself to responsible journalism in the public interest and to revealing illegal actions against great odds“.

Three more winners from Pakistan and Hong Kong receive the prize for the protection of human rights and from the USA for the fight against climate change. The prize money in the amount of 1.5 million Swedish crowns (approximately 162.000 EUR) will be split among them. The Foundation intends to fund legal costs for Edward Snowden.

Right Livelihood Award Foundation

! More information:
<http://www.rightlivelihood.org>



Masthead:
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